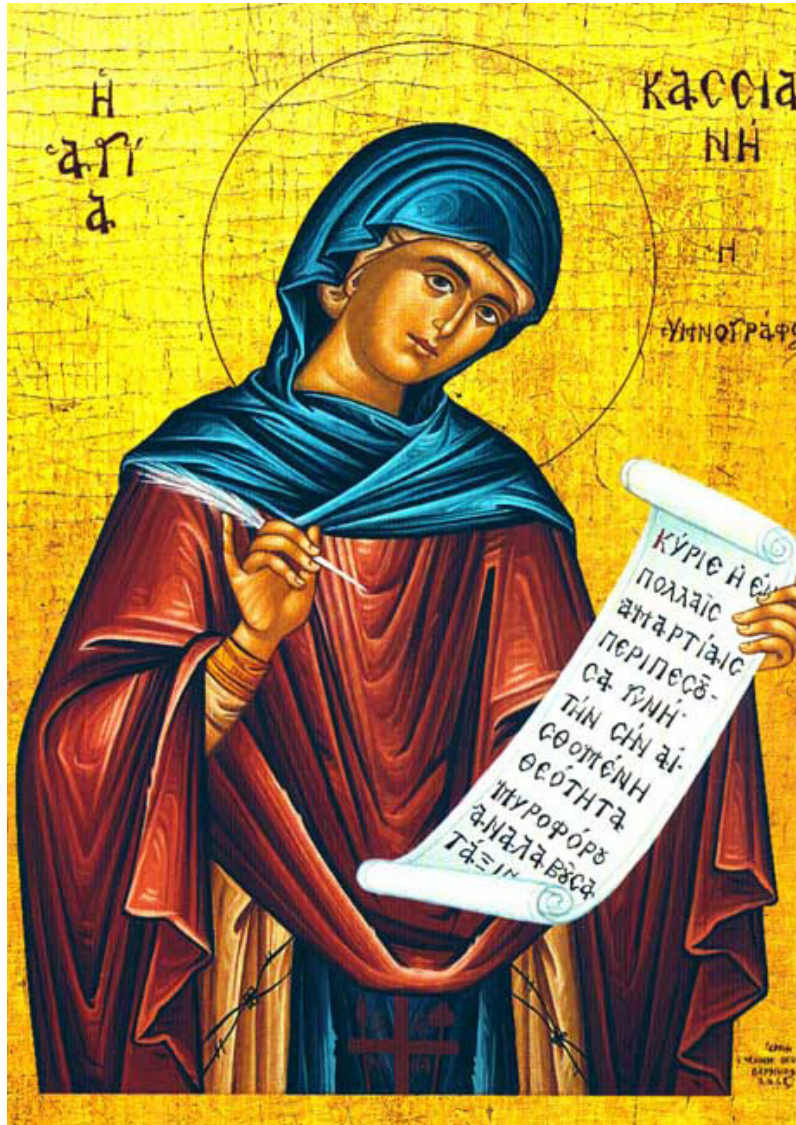


Living Orthodoxy



St. Cassiana the Hymnographer

Also in this issue...

Cumulative Index

St. Euphrosynus the Cook

INDEX ISSUE

#197 - Vol. XXXIII #5

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LIVING ORTHODOXY

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ON ANGER

Our Lord and Savior, when giving us a thorough lesson on the virtue of patience and gentleness (*i.e.*, teaching us not only to profess it with our lips, but to store it up in the inmost recesses of the soul) gave us this summary of evangelical perfection, saying: "If anyone smite thee on thy right cheek, offer him the other also (doubtless the 'right' cheek is mentioned, as another 'right' cheek cannot be found except, so to speak, in the face of the inner man), and by this He desires entirely to remove all incitement to anger from the deepest recesses of the soul; that is, if your external 'right' cheek has received a blow from the striker, the inner man also humbly consenting may offer its 'right' cheek to be smitten, sympathizing with the suffering of the outward man, and in a way submitting and subjecting its own body to wrong from the striker, that the inner man may not even silently be disturbed in itself at the blows.

— Abba Joseph, †432AD
from the *Confessions* of St. John Cassian

When the spirit is aroused by zeal we should take great care that the same anger which is used in the service of virtue does not come to dominate the mind, nor rule it as mistress, but like a handmaid ever at hand to render service, let it never depart from its place behind reason.

— St. Gregory the Great, †604AD

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SAINT CASSIANA THE MELODIST WHOM THE HOLY CHURCH COMMEMORATES ON THE 7TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

Saint Cassiana (variantly spelled Cassiani, Cassiane, Eikasia or simply Cassia) was born in Constantinople some time between 800 and 810AD to a noble family. Her father's aristocratic status gave her access to a good education. Tutored in both secular and sacred studies, she showed such an exceptional aptitude as to attract the attention of St. Theodore the Studite, who remarked upon her pious character. Indeed from an early age she desired to become a nun — but was also a spirited young woman of strong convictions with no hesitation to express her opinions.

Renowned for both her physical beauty and brilliant intelligence, she was chosen as one of the half-dozen “finalists” in the search of the heir-apparent Theophilus for a bride. Gathering for the final decision, Theophilus (later to be one of the great iconoclastic persecutors) approached her with the challenge: “From woman came corruption” (referring to the fall of Eve). Quick-witted, St. Cassiana responded, respectfully but firmly, “But also from woman sprang forth what is superior” (God's incarnation from the new Eve, the holy Virgin). Disconcerted by her forthrightness, Theophilus passed her over and offered the golden apple, the sign of his choice, to the demure and silent Theodora — who suffered through her husband's apostasy, but later was to be the instrument of the restoration of Orthodoxy (see 11 February). Indeed, the Lord's hand was apparent. Had the choice fallen upon Cassiana, there would have been unbearable conflict, and likely far worse. After the death of the empress Irene, Theophilus renewed the persecution of the Orthodox, venerators of the holy icons. While Theodora kept silence, Cassiana could not have done so — and indeed did not do so. She openly professed the Orthodox veneration of icons, visited imprisoned monks, sent them gifts. For her defiance of the imperial edict she was persecuted and publicly whipped.

Far from distressed by Theophilus' rejection, she found herself free to join the heavenly



bridegroom of her choosing. Tonsured a nun about 820, she founded a convent on one of the seven hills of Constantinople. She not only regulated the life of the convent, but also found time to pursue her scholarly and literary interests. Combining the talents of poet, theologian and musician, she wrote many hymns and musical settings for them, at least thirty-three of which have been incorporated into the official service books of the Orthodox Church, identified under one of the many variant spellings of her name (indeed, she is the only female hymnographer of ancient times to be so honored).

Certainly her best-known hymns are the irmoi for the canon of matins of Holy Saturday (repeated at the midnight office for holy Pascha), of which the ninth begins "Lament Me not, O Mother...", which it is almost impossible to sing for the tears of compunction those hymns evoke. But perhaps her most famous composition is the doxasticon of the aposticha at matins of Holy Wednesday,

in which she establishes a symmetry between the woman who was a sinner in the Gospel (Lk 7:37-50) and the Fall of Eve (Gen 3:8-11).

She was no quiet recluse, but indeed a quite extraordinarily outspoken woman for her time (or perhaps any). "I hate the fool who acts like a philosopher," she once wrote; with regard to those who lacked the courage to confess the Faith she said "I loathe silence when it is to time to speak out."

Living only for God, she reposed in peace sometime between 843 and 867AD. It is astounding and sad that we should know so little, and with so little accuracy, about the life of this extraordinary woman — but perhaps it is a commentary on her own devotion: clearly, she did not live and write in order to become famous, but rather in order to glorify God.

Composed by the editor, with thanksgiving to the editors of the Synaxarion (vol. VII, Appendix) and Wikipedia. St. Cassiana is not mentioned in the Prologue from Ochrid or the Great Collection of St. Dimitry of Rostov, but there is a fairly extensive entry in the Great Synaxaristes which was not consulted for this notice.

THE 7TH DAY OF THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER
FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE ALL-HOLY THEOTOKOS
COMMEMORATION OF OUR VENERABLE MOTHER CASSIANA,
THE HYMNOGRAPHER

AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried...": 6 stichera: 3 of the forefeast (see in the Menaion), and 3 of the venerable one, in Tone I: Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of heaven..."—

Like a nightingale singing hymns divine, like a lark uplifting her voice in song, like a melodious flute inspired by the Spirit of God, the venerable Cassiana setteth forth her incomparable hymns, and thereby moveth all the faithful to great compunction.

Cassiana, great among those whom the Spirit hath inspired, doth chant sweet-sounding hymns unto God, wherewith she instructeth us in piety and guideth us in the ways of repentance, that we may worship and glorify Christ our incarnate Savior.

Having acquired boldness before the Master of all, Cassiana standeth in the train of His all-pure Mother, and prayeth most earnestly, that those who honor her memory and celebrate it with splendor may be delivered from dire misfortunes and perils.

Glory...: Idiomelon, in Tone II—

When the New Rome held sway upon the earth, and its rulers upheld the Christian Faith, the venerable Cassiana, filled with the Spirit of God, chanted therein hymns of glory to Christ our

God, praising also His holy martyrs, adding the golden coins of her inspiration to our rich treasury of spiritual songs. Wherefore, hearkening to her wondrous poesy, let us clap our hands with gladness, O ye faithful, crying out in adoration to the Word Who took flesh of the Ever-virgin: Great is Thy mercy! O Lord, glory to Thee!

Now & ever... of the forefeast (see in the Menaion).

Aposticha stichera of the forefeast (see in the Menaion); and Glory...: Idiomelon of the venerable one, in Tone II—

The City of Constantine exulteth, enriched by the labors and memory of the chaste Cassiana; and, summoning the Christ-loving flock, it crieth out: Come, ye who love the venerable one, and let us rejoice on the day of her commemoration! Come and be glad, ye who love the saints of Christ! Come and behold the latter-day disciple of David the Psalmist! Come ye, and hearken to the melodious hymns she hath wrought for the good of our souls! For as the sinful woman, of whom she so eloquently sang, once washed the feet of Christ with her tears, so now doth Cassiana draw forth from us tears of compunction; and she prayeth now unceasingly to the Holy Trinity, that those who with faith celebrate

her memory may be delivered from corruption and temptations, and from all manner of tribulations.

Now & ever.... of the forefeast (see in the Menaion).

Troparion of the venerable one, in Tone VIII—

In thee, O mother, that which is fashioned according to the image of God was preserved; for, taking up thy cross, thou didst follow after Christ, and by thy hymnody thou dost teach us the power of repentance: that tears shed in contrition wash away our sins and transgressions. Wherefore, thy spirit rejoiceth with the angels, O venerable Cassiana.

Glory.... Now & ever...: Troparion of the forefeast (see in the Menaion).

AT MATINS

At “God is the Lord...”, the troparion of the forefeast, twice; Glory..., that of the venerable one; Now & ever..., of the forefeast, again.

After the kathismata of the Psalter, the sessional hymns of the forefeast (see in the Menaion).

Canon of the forefeast,, with 8 troparia, the irmos being chanted twice (see in the Menaion); and that of the venerable one, with 4 troparia, the acrostic whereof is “Like cassia is the hymnody of Cassiana”, in Tone VI—

ODE I

Irmos: The children of those who were saved have concealed beneath the earth Him Who of old covered the pursuing tyrant with the waves of the sea; but let us chant unto the Lord like the maidens: Gloriously hath He been glorified.

Like cassia doth the memory of the venerable Cassiana fill our souls with sweet fragrance, and like myrrh and stacte do her excellent hymns perfume the Church of Christ, moving all to chant: Gloriously hath He been glorified!

In chastity the venerable one avoided a royal marriage, preferring to betroth herself to Christ, the King of kings, to instruct maidens in the ways of God, and to teach them to chant unto Him: Gloriously hath He been glorified.

Knowing that tears of repentance and sighs of compunction are of more worth than costly ointment and precious gems, Cassiana praised the sinful woman who anointed the feet of Christ, crying: Gloriously hath He been glorified.

Theotokion: Elderly and past the age of begetting children, the pious Joachim and Anna yet begat the Mother of Him Who saved the children of Israel from the tyrant in the Red Sea; and like them they cried: Gloriously hath He been glorified.

ODE III

Irmos: Creation, beholding Thee, Who hadst suspended the whole earth without support upon the waters, Thyself suspended upon Golgotha, was seized with great awe, crying out: None is holy save Thee, O Lord!

Cassiana's hymns ever move us to contrition; for, hearing them we are filled with great awe, and falling down before the Savior Who was crucified for our sake, we cry out: None is holy save Thee, O Lord!

All creation is moved to awe, beholding the gift of hymnody which the venerable one hath been granted by Christ, the preëternal Word of God, that she might lead us to cry: None is holy save Thee, O Lord!

Seized and overcome by the fear of God, we sinners lift our voices in praise of the great Cassiana, who by her compunctionate hymns bringeth us to cry aloud unto Christ: None is holy save Thee, O Lord!

Theotokion: She who, according to the promise of God, was born to be the Mother of the Redeemer, would behold Him uplifted upon the Cross in the place of the skull, crying out: None is holy save Thee, O Lord!

Kontakion of the venerable one, in Tone III—

Resplendent with a mind inspired by the Spirit, O blessed and divinely wise Cassiana, thou art like a splendid diadem set upon the brow of the Church of Christ; for thine all-beauteous hymns adorn it like most precious gems. Wherefore, we fervently beseech thee: Grant the divine gift of thine inspiration unto those who earnestly desire it, that the faithful may ever cry out unto thee:

Rejoice, O venerable mother, thou glory and boast of all the Orthodox!

Ikos: Shining with the brilliance of piety, full of divine luster, thy hymns are like beauteous jewels of many facets, each reflecting the supernal radiance of Him Who dwelleth in light unapproachable, O Cassiana; and when we chant them with reverence and compunction, we are filled with sanctifying grace, which cleanseth us of sin and exalteth us in mind to heavenly things, which laying up in our hearts, we ponder in spirit, crying out to thee in thanksgiving: Rejoice, O venerable mother, thou glory and boast of all the Orthodox!

Sessional hymn of the venerable one, in Tone IV—

Watered by living streams of piety, thy mind flourished like a palm-tree, O Cassiana, and, nourished by the Spirit of God, it brought forth in abundance the fruits of an inspired intellect: the peerless hymns which fill the hearts of the faithful with compunction. Wherefore, taught by thee the ways of repentance, O venerable mother, in thanksgiving we cry unto thee: Entreat Christ our Savior, that He have mercy on those who honor thy holy memory.

Glory...., Now & ever.... of the forefeast (see in the Menaion).

ODE IV

Irmos: Foreseeing Thy divine condescension upon the Cross, Habbakuk cried out in awe: Thou hast cut down the dominion of the mighty, O Good One, entering into fellowship with those who are in hades, in that Thou art Almighty.

In meekness and humility didst thou refute the ungodly emperor, O Cassiana, defending the honored place of womanhood in the divine dispensation of man's salvation; wherefore, thou didst betroth thyself to the Almighty.

Against him who said "All that is evil hath come from a woman," Cassiana, filled with the Spirit, replied: "But from a woman all that is most sublime hath come," thus standing forth as champion for the all-holy Theotokos.

Theotokion: Seeing thee in foreshadowings and visions, O Theotokos, the prophets of God

perceived thee as the unquarried mountain, the rod of Aaron that put forth leaves and fruit, and the Mother of the Messiah, Who is God Almighty.

ODE V

Irmos: I rise early unto Thee, O Word of God, Who, in Thy loving-kindness, didst immutably debase Thyself and didst dispassionately subject Thyself to sufferings. Grant peace unto me who have fallen, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

Thou didst embrace the life of repentance, O venerable one, submitting thyself to monastic obedience, seeking to subject the passions of the flesh to thy spirit through fasting and ascetic feats, and thereby gaining peace for thy soul.

Having foresworn wedlock, O Cassiana, thou didst bow thy neck beneath the easy monastic yoke, daily rising early to greet in fervent prayer thy heavenly Bridegroom, Christ the Savior, Who loveth mankind and suffered for our sake.

Entangled are we in worldly concerns, beset are we by the sufferings of life and assailed by trials and temptations, but by thine earnest supplications move the Lord to grant us peace in His loving-kindness, O venerable mother.

Theotokion: Have pity on us who rise early unto thee, and in thy loving-kindness spread forth thy protecting veil over us, the fallen, O Mother of the Word, begging peace for us in thy supplications to thy Son and God, Who suffered for our sake.

ODE VI

Irmos: Jonah was swallowed, but was not held fast in the belly of the monster; for, serving as an image of Thee, Who didst suffer and wast given over for burial, he issued forth from the whale as from a bridal chamber. And he said to the watchmen, the vain and false guardians: Ye have forsaken His mercy!

Ye who have forsaken the mercy of Christ, who, in thrall to gluttony and the passions of the flesh, serve your base desires, hearken to the voice of the blessed Cassiana, who summoneth all to foreswear vanity and sin, and to offer tears of contrition and repentance, lest your souls perish utterly.

Mankind is swallowed up by iniquity, as by an all-devouring beast from whose maw few escape;

but in her hymnody Cassiana showeth us that repentance will free us from his imprisoning belly, and tears shed in remorse will force him to vomit us forth, as of old the sea monster spewed forth Jonah.

Nineveh repented in sackcloth and ashes when Jonah proclaimed the warning of the Lord, yet we fail to heed the inspired words of the holy Cassiana, who calleth upon us to weep bitter tears over our sins. Woe unto us, lest in our indifference we come to hear the dread words: Ye have forsaken His mercy!

Theotokion: O pure Theotokos, rescue us whom the monster of the abyss holdeth fast in his talons, seeking to devour us, and deliver us from his foul embrace, that, saved, we may escape the toils of death and find refuge in the haven of thy loving-kindness, in the splendors of the bridal chamber of thy Son.

Kontakion & ikos of the forefeast (see in the Menaion).

ODE VII

Irmos: O ineffable wonder! He, Who in the furnace delivered the venerable children from the flame, is laid in the grave, dead and devoid of breath, for the salvation of us who chant: O God our Deliverer, blessed art Thou!

Disdain us not, who with unworthy mouths dare to praise thy virtues and chant thy hymns, O Cassiana, but deliver us from the furnace of lusts, that with thee we may cry: O God our Deliverer, blessed art Thou!

Ye Christians, lift up your voices in song, extolling the venerable one, who in hymnody praised the woman who washed the feet of Christ with her tears, saying: "O Savior of men's souls, disdain me not!"

O Lord, accept our sighs and the streams of our tears, for, imitating the sinful woman, whom Cassiana praised, we cry out to Thee, the unfathomable Abyss of mercy: O God our Deliverer, blessed art Thou!

Theotokion: Flames await the ungodly in the life to come, for the love of God burneth those who spurn it, but it is salvation and delight for those who chant unto the Son of the Virgin: O God our Deliverer, blessed art Thou!

ODE VIII

Irmos: The godly children denounced the pillar of evil opposed to God; and the assembly of the iniquitous which raged against Christ deviseth empty plots, intending to slay Him Who holdeth life in the palm of His hand. Him doth all creation bless, glorifying Him forever.

Carrying the burden of our transgressions like a heavy weight, we imitate the sinful woman in all but repentance, for our eyes shed no tears to wash away our iniquities; but at the prayers of the holy Cassiana, O Lord, disdain us not, whom Thou hast created.

All-compunctionate is the great hymn which Cassiana wrote in praise of the sinful woman, teaching us to follow her in tearful repentance for our iniquities; wherefore, let us hearken to her prompting and cry unto Christ, Whom all creation doth bless, glorifying Him forever.

Sinful beyond all measure, we have set up our lusts as an idol, which in our evil we adore; but Cassiana teacheth us to cast down our passions like a pillar, and to cleanse our souls of idolatrous sin, worshipping Jesus, Whom all creation doth bless, glorifying Him forever.

Theotokion: Saved from damnation are we who worship the Son of the Virgin, Whose palms were pierced with nails for our sins, and Who died that we might have abundant life. Wherefore, let us cease our iniquities and cry: Him doth all creation bless, glorifying Him forever.

ODE IX

Irmos: Lament Me not, O Mother, beholding in the tomb the Son Whom thou didst conceive in thy womb without seed; for I shall arise and be glorified, and as God everlasting shall I exalt with glory those who magnify thee with faith and love.

In sacred hymnody did Cassiana glorify the wondrous Gurius, Samonas and Habib, who with the choir of the martyrs welcomed her to the mansions of paradise, wherein they join chorus together around the throne of Christ, our eternal God.

Auxentius and Mardarius, Eugene and Orestes, led by the divinely wise Eustratius escorted the venerable Cassiana to the everlasting bridal chamber,

where the banquet of the Lamb of God is set forth for all who magnify Him with faith and love.

Now let us exalt with glory Cassiana, in that she hath taught us to magnify the saints of God; for with the all-immaculate Theotokos, the honorable Forerunner and the companies of the martyrs she giveth everlasting praise to Almighty God.

Theotokion: Acclaim ye the Mother of Him Who was conceived without seed, the immaculate Theotokos whose all-pure womb is undefiled; for the eternal God Who was born of her will magnify with glory all who with faith and love magnify her with hymns of praise.

Exapostilarion of the venerable one: Spec. Mel.: "Hearken, ye women..."—

The City of Constantine boasteth in thee, O Cassiana, and the Church of Christ, illumined by thy hymnody, rejoiceth exceedingly in thy holy memory; for by thee are we all taught the power of repentance and the infinite loving-kindness of God Who loveth mankind.

Glory... Now & ever.... of the forefeast (see in the Menaion).

Aposticha of the forefeast (see in the Menaion); and Glory...: Idiomelon of the venerable one, in Tone IV—

Let us hymn and piously praise the saint of God — the harp of the Spirit and lamp of the Church of God — for her life was lived in accordance with her holy name. Wherefore, with laudation let us cry out to her: Rejoice, O divinely wise Cassiana, whose hymns are redolent of the myrrh and cassia wherewith the precious and incorruptible body of the Lord was embalmed! Rejoice, O holy one, who didst increase greatly the talant entrusted thee by God! Rejoice, O venerable one, most comely scion of devout nobility! Rejoice, O most blessed one, model of humility and chastity, who dwellest now in the bridal chamber of thy Master on high! Rejoice, O wise virgin, who leddest other maidens unto Christ the Bridegroom! Rejoice, O namesake of the great Cassian, guide of monastics and teacher of repentance! We beseech thee to deliver from all wrath and tribulation those who celebrate thy

holy memory, and to make us partakers of ineffable glory in the life to come.

Now & ever.... of the forefeast (see in the Menaion).

AT LITURGY

Prokimenon, in Tone IV—

Wondrous is God in His saints, the God of Israel.

Stichos: In congregations bless ye God, the Lord from the well-springs of Israel.

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, § 208

Brethren: Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Alleluia, in Tone I—

Stichos: With patience I waited patiently for the Lord, and He was attentive unto me, and He hearkened unto my supplication.

Stichos: And He brought me up out of the pit of misery, and from the mire of clay.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE, § 33

At that time, one of the Pharisees desired Jesus that He would eat with him. And He went down into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And behold, a woman in the city, who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had bidden Him saw it, he spake within himself, saying: "This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what

manner of woman this is who toucheth Him; for she is a sinner.” And Jesus answering said unto him: “Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee.” And he said: “Master, say on.” “There was a certain creditor who had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?” Simon answered and said: “I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most.” And He said unto him: “Thou hast rightly judged.” And He turned to the woman, and said unto Simon: “Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house; thou gavest Me no water for My feet: but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. Thou gavest Me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but

to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.” And He said unto her: “Thy sins are forgiven.” And those who sat at meat with Him began to say within themselves: “Who is this that forgiveth sins also?” And He said to the woman: “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

Communion Verse—

In everlasting remembrance shall the righteous be;
he shall not be afraid of evil tidings.

Author's note.: The stichera idiomela of this service are inspired by stichera composed by the venerable Cassiana herself: that on “Lord, I have cried” is inspired by one she composed for the Nativity of Christ; that from the Vespers Aposticha is based on one from the service to the Martyrs Gurius, Samonas & Habib (November 13th) and that from the Matins Aposticha is based on one from the service to the Greatmartyr Eustratius & companions (December 13th). The irmoi selected for the Canon of St. Cassiana are taken from Matins of Great & Holy Saturday (St. Cassiana composed the irmoi of Odes I through V herself; the rest were written by St. Cosmas of Maïuma).

Service composed in English by Reader Isaac E. Lambertsen ©2014 by the author. All rights reserved.

AKATHIST HYMN TO THE VENERABLE CASSIANA, HYMNOGRAPHER OF CONSTANTINOPLE

KONTAKION I

We who honor thee set forth praises of glorification for thee, the nun Cassiana, who wast chosen from an eminent family of Byzantium, and dost move us to amazement by thy hymnography. As thou hast boldness before the Lord, hearken to our unworthy entreaties and bear them to the Lord, the King of glory, that with compunction we may cry out to thee:

Rejoice, O venerable Cassiana, beloved hymnographer of Christ!

IKOS I

In thine angelic countenance thou wast like the holy angels, O all-beauteous Cassiana, and like the angels thou didst glorify the Lord with wondrous hymnody. Yet though we understand that we are in nowise thine equal in eloquence, we still dare to cry out to thee such praises as these:

Rejoice, thou who on earth didst delight the eyes of the angels;
rejoice, thou who from thy youth didst seek salvation!

Rejoice, thou who wast chosen by the heavenly Bridegroom to be His own bride;
rejoice, thou who for thy works hast been called the sweet-voiced writer of hymns!

Rejoice, thou who didst clothe thy soul in the raiment of Christ;

rejoice, thou who didst lay up the gifts of the Holy Spirit in thy heart!

Rejoice, O venerable Cassiana, beloved hymnographer of Christ!

KONTAKION II

Seeing the piety of her mother, from her youth the venerable Cassiana was accustomed to imitate her and show zeal for the salvation of her soul above all, chanting unto God in her sweet prayers: Alleluia!

IKOS II

When thou wast a young child, O divinely wise Cassiana, with the intellect given thee by God thou didst recognize what is good and what is beautiful; for, subjected to beating, thou didst suffer for the Truth. And we, perceiving such wisdom in thee, hymn thy suffering for Christ as is meet:

Rejoice, thou who in the time of persecution wast not afraid to confess Christ;

rejoice, thou who in thy sufferings didst crucify thyself with Christ!

Rejoice, thou who didst enrapture all with the beauty of thy soul;

rejoice, thou who didst fortify the weak with the strength of thy spirit!

Rejoice, thou who wast aflame with burning love for the King of glory;

rejoice, thou who didst desire to imitate Him in all things!

Rejoice, O venerable Cassiana, beloved hymnographer of Christ!

KONTAKION III

The power of the Lord overshadowed thee, strengthening thee for thy struggles, O humble-minded Cassiana; for thou didst suffer for the veneration of icons during the reign of the Emperor Leo, glorifying God by chanting: Alleluia!

IKOS III

Possessed of ardent love for a good confession, thou didst desire to enter the ranks of the nuns, O Christ-loving Cassiana. And, seeing such love as thou hadst for the monastic life, we chant unto thee:

Rejoice, thou who among women didst wield a profound intellect;

rejoice, thou who didst fearlessly trample upon the wiles of the evil one!

Rejoice, thou who didst maintain the purity of the Faith throughout thy whole life;

rejoice, thou who by thy confession of Christ didst render thy soul white!

Rejoice, thou who didst cleave unto the Lord with all the might of thy soul;

rejoice, thou who while yet in this life didst dwell in the Holy Spirit!

Rejoice, O venerable Cassiana, beloved hymnographer of Christ!

KONTAKION IV

The enemy of the human race unleashed a storm of evil assaults upon thee, for he did not want to see thee serving the Lord in the monastic rank, O venerable Cassiana; but thou, disdaining all the wiles of the enemy, didst remain faithful to the Lord, chanting unto Him: Alleluia!

IKOS IV

Seeing the magnificence of thy beauty, O youthful Cassiana, the Emperor Theophilus wished to test thine intelligence, and said to thee: "Evil came into the world through a woman!" But thou didst reply to him straightforwardly: "Yet through a woman the most sublime good also came into the world!", referring in this way to the Savior. Thus thou didst turn away from an earthly husband in the person of the Emperor Theophilus and didst hasten to the sweet embrace of the heavenly Bridegroom, clothing thyself in the monastic habit. And we, rejoicing in this thy wisdom, praise thee, saying:

Rejoice, for thou didst not desire an earthly bridegroom;

rejoice, for before him thou didst confess the heavenly Bridegroom!

Rejoice, thou who in thy wisdom didst bless the Lord;

rejoice, thou who by confessing her Son didst honor the Mother of God!

Rejoice, thou who didst desire the monastic habit more than royal vesture;

rejoice, thou who with love didst clothe thyself in that angelic raiment!

Rejoice, O venerable Cassiana, beloved hymnographer of Christ!

KONTAKION V

Thou wast like a divinely guided and radiant star, O incomparable virgin Cassiana; for thou didst guide to salvation the young virgins who resorted to the holy convent which thou didst found, and therein didst chant unto the Creator: Alleluia!

IKOS V

Seeing thy pious manner of life, O angelic Cassiana, Saint Theodore the Studite called thee blessed for thy great confession of Christ and the splendid monastic perfection thou didst manifest. And, though we stand at far remove from thy monastic accomplishments, yet do we desire to chant these laudations unto thee:

Rejoice, thou who didst burn with zeal for the monastic life;
rejoice, thou who wast aflame for the Creator with seraphic love!
Rejoice, thou who didst entrust to the Lord the salvation of thy soul;
rejoice, thou who didst walk before the Lord in the commandments of God!
Rejoice, thou who didst hold to Orthodoxy without wavering;
rejoice, thou who in time of persecutions didst defend the veneration of icons!
Rejoice, O venerable Cassiana, beloved hymnographer of Christ!

KONTAKION VI

O God-loving Cassiana, thou wast shown to be a proclaimer of true theology and piety, not only among women, but also among men made wise by the Lord for His glorification. And even to these days thou dost glorify God by thy works, chanting: Alleluia!

IKOS VI

Shining with great love for the Lord, with penitent weeping thou didst chant unto Him: "Incline Thyself unto the sighing of my heart, O Thou Who didst bend the heavens down by Thine abasement, that I may embrace and with the hairs of my head wipe dry Thine all-pure feet which, when Eve heard the sound thereof after noonday in paradise, she hid herself in fear." And paying heed to this thy hymn of repentance, we chant unto thee:

Rejoice, priceless ornament of the Church of Christ;
rejoice, sure consolation amid griefs and sorrows!

Rejoice, thou who by thy hymnody dost delight the hearts of the faithful;
rejoice, all-beauteous foliage redolent with the faith of Christ!
Rejoice, young branch growing on the tree of paradise;
rejoice, rose of Eden blooming in the midst the garden of Christ!
Rejoice, O venerable Cassiana, beloved hymnographer of Christ!

KONTAKION VII

Wishing to magnify His Church, the Lord Who loveth mankind gave thee to it, O glorious hymnographer, that thou mightest offer up thy works for its glory, chanting praise therein to God the Creator: Alleluia!

IKOS VII

The Lord poured forth new grace upon thee, O divinely blessed Cassiana, rewarding thee with talants of hymnography; for men who lived in thy times honored thee in the company of the venerable Theodore the Studite and Saints Cosmas of Maïuma, Andrew of Crete, Theophanes, and others like them. And delighting in thy liturgical hymnody to this day, we praise thee, saying:

Rejoice, writer of hymns, great and most honored;
rejoice, most glorious bride of Christ!
Rejoice, thou who in the Church of Christ art glorified as is meet;
rejoice, thou who wast guided to the path of salvation by the right hand of the Lord!
Rejoice, precious vessel of the Holy Spirit;
rejoice, priceless diamond of the Orthodox Faith!
Rejoice, O venerable Cassiana, beloved hymnographer of Christ!

KONTAKION VIII

A strange wonder do we behold in thee, O venerable Cassiana; for by great suffering thou didst betroth thy blameless soul unto God, spurning all the beauties of the earth and chanting with love to Him alone: Alleluia!

IKOS VIII

“Thou art my whole desire, Thou art my delight, O Jesus most sweet!” Thus didst thou cry out unceasingly to the Creator of all things, O Cassiana beloved of God; Wherefore, rejoicing at the recording of thy name in the heavens, with compunction we offer up to thee such praises as these:

Rejoice, diadem of heavenly purity;
rejoice, star of beauty beyond compare!
Rejoice, ray shining forth in heaven;
rejoice, moon illumining the earth amid the night!
Rejoice, divine crown of incorruption;
rejoice, right peaceful abode of salvation!
Rejoice, O venerable Cassiana, beloved hymnographer of Christ!

KONTAKION IX

Every angelic being marveled at the grace poured forth in thee by the Creator; for therewith thou didst hallow thine immortal compositions, wherein thou didst glorify God, chanting: Alleluia!

IKOS IX

Even the most eloquent of orators are unable to praise thy works and creations worthily, O divinely wise Cassiana; for thereby art thou glorified again and again within the Church of God. But we, as far as is possible, chant to thee with compunction:

Rejoice, holy maiden chosen by God;
rejoice, all-joyous turtledove in the hand of God!
Rejoice, melodious five-stringed harp divinely tuned;
rejoice, sweet-voiced and beauteous flute of paradise!
Rejoice, for thou wast intelligent beyond all women;
rejoice, for thou art more honorable than all virgins!
Rejoice, O venerable Cassiana, beloved hymnographer of Christ!

KONTAKION X

Desiring to save thy soul, thou didst flee the vanity of the world, abiding in tranquility and holiness; and in thy monastic habitation thou didst

unceasingly struggle, chanting unto thy beloved Bridegroom: Alleluia!

IKOS X

Thy heavenly Bridegroom was for thee an insuperable bulwark and a mighty aid, O sweet-voiced Cassiana; and unto Him didst thou sing in heartfelt repentance: “O Lord Almighty, Thou didst deliver the sinful woman from her many years of offenses, and didst justify the publican over the Pharisee. And reckoning myself among them, I pray: Have mercy on me!” Wherefore, desiring to be counted worthy of thy prayerful intercession, we cry to thee thus:

Rejoice, mouth of true repentance speaking with godly voice;
rejoice, thou who, seeking for salvation of soul, didst not spare thine own life!
Rejoice, thou who with tears didst entreat the Lord for mercy with the sinful woman and the publican;
rejoice, thou who with tears of repentance didst obtain forgiveness from Christ!
Rejoice, for on earth thou didst lift up thy heart on high;
rejoice, for in heaven thou hast been vouchsafed the mansions of paradise by the Lord!
Rejoice, O venerable Cassiana, beloved hymnographer of Christ!

KONTAKION XI

O all-blessed virgin Cassiana, to the Creator of all, Who redeemed His creation in His sufferings on the Cross hast thou offered a most compunctionate hymn: “Creation, beholding Thee, Who suspended the whole earth without support upon the waters, Thyself suspended upon Golgotha, was seized with great awe, crying out: None is holy save Thee, O Lord!” And unto Him do we also chant with thee: Alleluia!

IKOS XI

Thou wast like a brilliant star, O all-wise Cassiana, resplendent in the purity of thy virginal way of life. And we, compunctionately entreating purity of heart from the Lord, hymn thy virtuous manner of life and say to thee thus:

Rejoice, for thou didst not prevent thy head
 from bowing down before Christ in thy heart;
 rejoice, for thou didst build a splendid habita-
 tion for the All-holy Trinity in thy soul!
 Rejoice, blessed virgin resplendent with the
 beauty of paradise;
 rejoice, lily most sweet, redolent of grace divine!
 Rejoice, thou who didst make of thy body a
 temple of immaculate purity;
 rejoice, thou who in thy heart didst strew thy
 path to Christ with the rose-petals of thy soul!
 Rejoice, O venerable Cassiana, beloved hym-
 nographer of Christ!

KONTAKION XII

Grace was given thee by God, that thou might-
 est compose thy matchless hymns for Him, O
 venerable Cassiana, wisest of women; and, seeing
 the Lord's great mercy upon thee, we glorify the
 Creator, praising thy hymns and singing: Alleluia!

IKOS XII

Hymning thy fervent intercession before the throne
 of the All-holy Trinity in behalf of those who call
 upon thee for help, O Cassiana, nun of Christ, we
 praise thy labors and struggles, and we believe that
 the Lord our God will mercifully grant us all our
 petitions through thy supplications; for thy prayers
 are most beautiful in His sight. Wherefore, O ven-
 erable one, accept from us such laudations as these:

Rejoice, thou who wast beloved of the heavenly
 Father from the time of thy birth;
 rejoice, thou who wast glorified by the Son of
 God as an ever-blossoming bride!
 Rejoice, thou who in the heavens art blessed
 maternally by the Queen of heaven;
 rejoice, thou who art called blessed and praised
 by the Church of Christ!

Rejoice, thou who dost reside with the holy
 virgins in the choir of the saints;
 rejoice, thou who hymnest the All-holy Trinity
 with the ranks of the angels!
 Rejoice, O venerable Cassiana, beloved hym-
 nographer of Christ!

KONTAKION XIII

O holy virgin, angelic Cassiana, mercifully accept
 this our akathist hymn; for hymning therein the
 beauty of thy virtues, we beseech thee: Ask of thy
 beloved Bridegroom, our Lord, God and Savior
 Jesus Christ, that He grant forgiveness of offenses
 and everlasting joy unto those who chant unto
 Him: Alleluia!

*This Kontakion is recited thrice, whereupon Ikos I and
 Kontakion I are repeated.*

PRAYER TO THE VENERABLE CASSIANA

O holy and venerable Cassiana! Having fought
 the good fight on earth, in the heavens thou hast
 received the crown of righteousness that the Lord
 hath prepared for all who love Him. Wherefore,
 we rejoice in the all-glorious ending of thy life,
 and we honor thy holy memory. Standing before
 the throne of God, accept our supplications and
 bear them to the most merciful God, that He may
 forgive us our every transgression and help us to
 withstand the wiles of the devil; that, delivered
 from tribulations, sickness, misfortunes, perils and
 every evil, we may live in piety and righteousness
 in the present age, and may be vouchsafed through
 thine intercession, even though we are unworthy,
 to behold good things in the land of the living,
 glorifying God Who alone is glorified in His saints
 — the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit —
 now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Translated from the Church Slavonic by the reader Isaac E. Lambertsen.

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SAINT EUPHROSYNUS THE COOK WHOM THE CHURCH COMMEMORATES ON THE 11TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER

Our holy father Euphrosynus was born of impoverished peasants, and was raised without an education. Grown, he entered a monastery, donned the schema and became a servant of the monks. Because of his boorish upbringing, he worked in the kitchen as a cook and was derided and belittled by all the monks. Nevertheless, he suffered all the insults with courage, never losing his composure, and his disposition was always calm. Even though he was rustic in manner, he was not lacking in wisdom as will be clearly illustrated by this story.

In his monastery there was also a priest, a friend of God, who always entreated the Lord to reveal to him the type of blessings those who love God will receive (in the end). One night the priest was sleeping and it appeared to him that he was in a certain garden, observing all the beautiful foliage with awe and amazement. There he also happened to see the monastery's cook, Euphrosynus, who stood in the midst of the garden enjoying its many sights. He approached him, and asked him what that garden was and what he was doing there. And Euphrosynus answered: "The garden is for the select people of God.* I was deemed worthy by the grace of God to inhabit it." And the priest said to him: "And what are you doing in the garden?" Euphrosynus answered: "I am master over all the vegetation that you see here. I rejoice and marvel at its awe-inspiring beauty and grace."



* It is noteworthy that St. Gregory the Dialogist describes in many parts of his *Tetrabiblos* the rewards that those people who love God shall receive. They are beyond anything we can imagine, and there is no resemblance between them and the earthly rewards. In this respect St. Paul states, "But as it is written, 'Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those who love Him'." (I Cor. 2:9)

The priest said to him: “Is it possible for you to give me one of the fruits of the garden?” Euphrosynos answered: “Yes, you shall receive all of them by the grace of my God.” The priest pointed to some apples and asked him to give him a sample or two. Euphrosynos took the apples and put them in the priest’s overcoat, and said: “Behold, enjoy these apples as you have requested.” At that moment the symandron sounded so that the fathers would be roused for matins. The priest awoke and, though he thought that the vision he saw was a dream, he put his hand inside his overcoat and — lo the miracle! He actually found the apples. He marveled at their fragrance and stood motionless for a long time.

Then he went to Church and saw Euphrosynos standing there. He took him to the side and compelled him under oath to tell him where he had been that night. Euphrosynos said to him: “Forgive me, father. I went nowhere at night. Only now I have come to the service.” And the priest said: “For this I have bound you by oath

so that the wonders of God may become known. So why don’t you tell the truth?” Then the meek Euphrosynos answered: “I was there, O father, in the midst of God’s rewards, which those who love God shall receive, and which you wished to see for a long time. There you saw me, too, partaking of the fruits of that garden. God wished to teach you concerning the rewards of the righteous; so He worked such a miracle through me, the humble one. The priest said: “And which of the fruits of the garden did you give me, O father Euphrosynos?” He answered: “The beautiful and delightful apples which you have placed in your bed. But father, forgive me, for I am but a worm and not a man.”

Afterwards the priest told of the vision to all the brethren, who were so uplifted that they marveled, inspired to be more virtuous and zealous. Meanwhile, the blessed Euphrosynos, avoiding the praise of men, left the monastery in secret for a distant land and was never seen again. Those who ate those apples were healed of their infirmities.

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